

PROPOSAL--A PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL WRITING

As the world narrows, the range of the writer must widen.

Steadily over the past five years the number of young foreign writers coming to the Program in Creative Writing has increased. For 1965-66 these countries were represented: Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Phillipines, Australia, India, Turkey, Poland, England, Ireland, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana, Canada. It is obvious that there is a strong sense of wanting to come to the United States on their part, which is equalled by our feeling of being rewarded with insights and an understanding of distant cultures.

Our experience has been that the barrier of language is not as great as might have been feared. Communication really is possible and at a productive level. Already an anthology of translations from recent French poetry has been published, an anthology from Chinese verse is finished and accepted for publication, one from Korean is almost done, while anthologies from the Polish and Bengali (Calcutta) are well underway. Individual volumes in process of translation are being prepared from the Japanese, Turkish, Spanish and Pashto (Afghanistan). These works are made possible by the Translation Workshop (the only one of its kind in this country), under the direction of Professor Frederick Will, assisted by Professor David Hayman and Miss Leslie Niesh.

The enrichment for the student from abroad is not only in helping to put valuable, and often little known, literature of his own country into English. He also receives criticism of his own work which is helpful to his literary development, as well as acquiring a grasp of western and American literature he could not find at home.

A further aspect of the international presence on the campus of the University of Iowa is the permanent change it makes in the attitude of the visiting writers toward the USA. Living in depth, within a small but artistically abundant community, in a typical state of the Midwest, they discover something of authentic American life. Often those coming from Eastern Europe or Asia have been told, or have read, grave distortions about this country. By living here month after month they see for themselves the plain truth, and are persuaded as they could not be if they either stayed on in their own countries and read U.S. Information Agency materials, or visited the USA on a fast eight to twelve weeks tour.

Many of the foreign writers who would come are capable of enriching the life of this campus. Thus, the Polish writer from Cracow, educated at Jagellonian University, the most distinguished ancient institution in Poland, will give public lectures on the situation of the writer in the Stalinist period, and on the change when the famous "thaw" took place. There is no other way in which the University of Iowa could discover these astonishing facts. Should a community of international writing develop here, it would be my intention to have a steady sequence of such contributions to the world concerns of this University. There would be poetry readings, both

in the original languages and in translations, talks by such people as Jyotirmoy Datta, staff writer for THE STATESMAN, India, a shrewd commentator on the current scene. He is currently on the staff of Asian Studies Institute, University of Chicago, and his wife is translator of DR. ZHIVAGO into Bengali. Yumiko Kumagai, author of six novels in Japanese, the leading young woman novelist of Japan, is now here, with her husband, a film producer and director. We are planning to have him make a film on how the University of Iowa, Iowa City, and the many art activities here, along with the surrounding landscape, look to an Asian film maker.

Should The Program for International Writing be created, however, there would be far more opportunities to have such people offering events of campus-wide interest, as the level of person invited to come would be substantially more advanced than at present. It would be desirable to have people come who have begun to establish careers in their own countries, and thus would be more intellectually mature than many of the younger students who have come in the past.

Although publicity is certainly not the motive for wanting to make such a Program, it might be proper to add that such a community of worldwide talent would give the University of Iowa a great deal of dignified attention, not only in the USA, but also abroad. Indeed, this could readily lead to other programs being established here, in modern literature and in international matters.

Attached is a statement of the personnel and positions, along with their costs, necessary to implement such a Program as has been described.

FUNDS NEEDED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

The Program for International Writing would not be a limited, one Department project, but would involve not only The Program in Creative Writing, the Department of English, the Department of Comparative Literature, but also all of the language Departments. Thus, this year two of our writers are teaching assistants in French, one in German, and one has been an assistant in Chinese. The modest costs to the University, therefore, should not be thought of as narrowly belonging to a single Department.

Director of the Program--In order to establish this International Writing effort, Paul Engle is willing to serve as Director, until it becomes solidly a part of the University. He would add this to his other duties, emphasizing the raising of funds, approaches to foundations and corporations, and the very crucial enlisting of many forms of aid from the U.S. Government, especially the Department of State. Should the Program become effective, a permanent Director should be appointed, one who would be of teaching value in The Program itself, as well as in the Writer's Workshop. For the initial year, then, the Director represents no cost.

Associate Director--This should be an appointment at least of

Assistant Professor rank, and perhaps Associate Professor. It should be someone who is a published writer, with wide foreign background, especially in Asia, since so many of our people already have European experience. The position should involve all of the heavy correspondence with writers in all parts of the world, a very large labor, correspondence with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in the Department of State (which arranges visas, helps in selection, offers travel, etc.), and such helpful groups as the Asia Foundation, the JDR 3rd Fund (John Rockefeller), and the care of writers when they arrive in Iowa City, a large burden, involving places to live, furnishings, clothing, registration advice, food, the many demands of gifted people far from home. The Department of English already pays Leslie Nieh, who has the present equivalent of this job, \$5000⁰⁰. A permanent salary ought to begin at \$9000. Thus, The added cost to the University is only

\$4000

Secretary to the Program--the bulk of papers for dealing with writers from every part of the world, letters, manuscripts, forms, would be enormous. They must be filed. Endless letters must be written. Publications will be a part of the Program's activity, and they will need a secretary to handle correspondence, proof, etc. Estimated salary

\$3500.

Stationary, stamps--the Program should have its own letterhead. Postage will be a substantial item, foreign mail, especially with manuscripts, being expensive. Estimated cost

\$2000

Fellowships--Paul Engle will undertake the raising of most Fellowship money, from Foundations, corporations and the Department of State, but the University must present evidence that it also believes in this Program. What is needed is modest--one Fellowship for each of the world's areas, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Far East, Near East, Latin America, Africa. If the University could find \$3500 for each of these Fellowships, it would offer solid evidence to Foundations and the Department of State that this project had firm support in Iowa City. Six Fellowships, at \$3500 each

\$21,000

Total asked from the University of Iowa

\$30,500

Paul Engle would undertake the raising of sufficient funds to bring the total expenditures to \$100,000 a year. As of September, 1966, roughly \$22,000 can already be committed, as a minimal beginning.

Two other items are important, neither involving actual costs to the University.

1. The writers who would come should not be regarded as conventional students. They would be much farther advanced than the term "student" normally suggests. They should be in the category of "visiting artists", save for the few wishing to take advanced degrees. Tuition should not be charged these people, although

they should be given the privileges of the University. Their contribution to the breadth of the University will far exceed any standard definition of student.

2. Housing is very important for such people as would come under this Program. They will be too old in most cases for dormitory rooms. What they need is, indeed, the greatest necessity for all writers, at the University of Iowa or anywhere in the world--small, self-contained apartments in which they can have that indispensable privacy which every writer must have in order to create. This does not mean elaborate housing, but a minimum apartment. This would mean no cost to the University, since monthly rental would be guaranteed, but it does mean some care for setting aside definite housing units. These must not be shared, since no writer can produce his work in company with others. (This also applies to future housing for American graduate student writers). Each year Paul Engle has spent days finding small furnished apartments at a rental the visiting foreign writer can afford, and each year the number of these places becomes smaller; those available are universally ancient, ugly and, often, unworthy of people who in many cases have a considerable position in their own countries. Apartments in old houses would serve well, if painted. Few of these writers will have cars, so that proximity to the campus is important. Top rent should be \$80.00.

3. A home for the Program is necessary. Because it has adequate space to act as a center, the building UTA next to the Union is ideal. Offices for the Director and Associate Director are available, and there is a large room for meetings which would accomodate all the foreign writers at one time, something which is very helpful. Since all other temporary buildings in the area are being vacated by The Program in Creative Writing, save for UTA, the use of that building would be gratefully received.

4. Since the largest item in Program costs is the Fellowship fund, if the University could this year finance the Associate Director's salary, a secretary and the papeystamp account, we could defer the Fellowship problem until 1967, the first time candidates could be found in any case. It would be helpful to have the knowledge of this help now, even if funds ~~were~~ ^{were} not available until next year.

5. A small fund for visiting lectures would be very helpful. A Japanese scholar now in London will go to Berkeley this winter to lecture. A decent fee would allow him to stop here and speak on a subject which is his specialty, the haiku poem. There are several such opportunities every year to bring people who could speak on topics of wide interest.

\$1000

6. A brochure emphasizing the recent successes of The Program in Creative Writing, as well as the expanding international aspect of the Program, is planned for the autumn. It will cost perhaps a few hundred dollars. There is also the cost of an occasional cele-

bration of the foreign writer here, one being planned for November, when A.A. Heckman of The Hill Foundation will be here, and quite probably others, from The Department of State and Foundations. Costs are not great, but do recur each year.

\$1000

7. If the Translation Workshop continues to grow at its present rate, Professor Will must have help. Probably a new appointment could be made for a young writer with language capacities and experience who could teach both in Translation and in one of the regular writing Workshops.

SUMMARY OF COSTS, PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL WRITING

Director	No cost
Associate Director (this sum to be added to current salary of \$5000 for Miss Leslie Nieh, now acting in this capacity for foreign students and helping with translations from the Chinese)	\$ 4000
Secretary (for the first year, perhaps beginning January 1, 1967, it might be possible to use a half-time person) A grade V secretary at \$310 a month	\$ 3720
Stationery, stamps, etc.	\$ 2000
Visiting lecturers.	\$ 1000
Entertainment, brochures, etc.	\$ 1000
	<u>\$11720</u>

Paul Engle will try to raise a substantial Fellowship fund in the coming year, but his case would be enormously strengthened if he could prove that the University would offer minimal support, at least for the four principal areas of the world, Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa. Four at \$3500 would be \$14000

It is conceivable that the amount for each Fellowship might be lower for the University, the difference to be made up from private funds.